

New Federal Data Reveal Racial Inequities

By **Kendall Everette Cook**

We **reported** last week that from 1995- 2015, the bachelor's degree attainment gap between white and black adults and white and Hispanic adults widened by 9 and 7 percentage points, respectively. (More figures from that report below.) But the Education Department subsequently published even more numbers showing how low-income and underrepresented students are falling behind in school.

Last Tuesday, the department's Office for Civil Rights unveiled new data from the 2013-2014 school year showing gaps affecting educational equity and opportunity among black, Latino and American Indian students, as well as students with disabilities and English-language learners. Those disparities were attributed to uses of discipline, restraint and seclusion, access to courses and programs related to college and career readiness, and access to early learning.

The **Civil Rights Data Collection** also tracked chronic absenteeism for the first time and found that about 6.5 million of all K-12 students were considered chronically absent (meaning they missed 15 or more school days during the year). That includes 3 million – or 18 percent – of all high school students.

Additional new findings include:

- Black and Latino students made up 38 percent of those enrolled at schools offering AP courses – yet less than a third of students actually took AP courses. Similar disparities exist in advanced math and science courses like chemistry, physics, algebra II and calculus.
- In schools with high numbers of black and Latino students, 10 percent of teachers were in their first year on the job – twice the rate found in schools enrolling low numbers of black and Latino students.
- Despite black students comprising just 15 percent of students overall, they represented 21 percent of chronically absent students who also attend schools where more than half of teachers missed more than 10 days of work.
- 1.6 million students attended a high school with a police officer but no guidance counselor.

Back to the latest Conditions of Education **report**, which the Education Department delivers annually to Congress: Similar to past editions, the 2016 iteration covers demographics and participation in elementary, secondary and postsecondary education.

But new this year, the department's National Center for Education Statistics spotlights indicators of early learning behaviors, early academic gains, family socioeconomic status, and differences in post-bachelor's employment outcomes by sex and race or ethnicity.

A couple other noteworthy findings:

- The positive relationship between initial and early learning behaviors and academic gains in reading, math and science were larger for students from less wealthy households than for students from more wealthy ones.
- Female full-time, year-round workers earned less than their male colleagues in nearly all of the occupation groups examined and for every sector. Black young adults who worked full-time, year-round also earned less than their white peers in most jobs.

National College Access Network (<http://www.collegeaccess.org/SD06142016Article6>)